

Your New Hamster

– a guide to its care.

Congratulations on the new addition to your family. This is an exciting time for everyone and we hope that you will have many happy years together. This handout covers some of the basic facts about keeping a hamster. Please read it carefully; if you have any further questions ask a member of staff.

Suggested Feeding Guidelines

In the wild, hamsters forage for their food so it is likely that the usual hamster mixes are a perfectly acceptable form of food for these creatures. Hamsters should have a readily topped up bowl of food which they will consume mostly at night. They should also be provided with a water bottle that is cleaned and topped up each day.

Handling and Housing

There are many types of hamster available but the most common is the Syrian. Hamsters are solitary animals so it is imperative that they are kept singly to avoid fighting and injury.

Hamsters are also well known for their ability to escape, many a Hamster has been called Houdini! For this reason it is important to buy an escape-proof cage or aquarium. In fact you can purchase some quite fantastic hamster cages now with connecting tunnels, wheels and bedding areas to keep these small critters happy.

For bedding materials use pine shavings or shredded paper. Do not use cotton wool, shredded J-cloths or similar materials as they can get caught around the feet and act like a snare causing great harm.

Due to their nocturnal habits it is important that you wake a hamster up for play carefully and slowly to avoid frightening them – a sleepy hamster will be grumpy and more likely to bite!

Neutering

Because your hamster lives on its own it is not necessary to neuter it. However some female hamsters do develop problems with their ovaries and so surgery is occasionally necessary.

Dental Care

Hamsters' incisor teeth will grow throughout life, therefore it is important that an array of chewing toys is available to help wear the teeth down. You should check your hamster's front teeth from time to time to ensure they do not

become overgrown and cause ulceration of the lips.

Playing and Exercise

It is very important that your hamster gets used to handling, so as soon as you get it you should make a point of handling it gently each day.

Your hamster should have a big enough cage to allow some exercise toys like a wheel or some climbing ladders. Remember, hamsters are nocturnal animals so they will only really become active at night time. As such keeping them in a bedroom may not be the best idea!

Emergency Service

Parkvets has a vet on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. In the event of an emergency, day or night, you should always telephone your usual Parkvets clinic and you will be given the appropriate information on what to do. Alternatively, call the emergency number 020 8300 8111

And Finally

We hope that you will have lots of fun and pleasure from your hamster over the coming years. We trust he or she will enjoy good health and to help achieve this we recommend a health review with one of our vets each year.

Should you need further advice about the health or welfare of your hamster then please contact us at the practice.

Special Offer for Ruxley Manor Garden Centre Customers

For your peace of mind Parkvets have teamed up with Ruxley Manor Garden Centre to offer you a 10% discount on your hamster's first health check up. Visit our website at www.parkvets.com to find a Parkvets clinic near you.

You should obtain a voucher from Ruxley Manor Garden Centre and present it plus your receipt to Parkvets to claim your discount.



RUXLEY MANOR
GARDEN CENTRE

Parkvets

Veterinary Hospital (020) 8300 8111

Belvedere (020) 8311 5250

Bexley (01322) 553456

Eltham (020) 8859 7914

Longfield (01474) 703377

Mottingham (020) 8857 2100

Swanley (01322) 665916

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